Violetta Cavalli-Sforza is Associate Professor of Computer Science at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, where she has taught since 2008. She holds a B.S. and a M.S. in Civil Engineering (1980) and a M.S. in Computer Science-Computer Engineering (1985) from Stanford University, plus a Ph.D. in Intelligent Systems from the University of Pittsburgh (1998) focused on computer-assisted instruction. She has been a staff member (1994-1999) and visiting researcher (2003-2007) at Carnegie Mellon University in machine translation, an assistant professor at San Francisco State University (2000-2002), and a consultant for the Linguistic Data Consortium on Arabic-related projects (2003-2008, 2012-2015).

Her interest in the Arabic language, first as a language learner and then for Natural Language Processing, led to funding from the National Science Foundation and Fulbright for research in Morocco, where she eventually settled. She teaches NLP, AI, HCI, as well as basic computer science and programming languages; her research focuses on computer-assisted language learning and readability assessment, resource construction for Arabic and Berber, and information visualization. At AUI she coordinated the Computer Science program, co-led the NECHE accreditation effort, and promoted undergraduate multidisciplinary research. Currently Coordinator of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching, Learning and Scholarship, she is also Assistant Vice-President for Academic Affairs in charge of student and faculty matters.

She shares with us:

My interest in being part of the PRME WG on Sustainability Mindset is actually linked to my first field of study (Civil Engineering with a focus on Infrastructure Planning and Management) and my current way of life. I began my studies interested in architecture, urban planning and economic development for sustainability many years ago and then switched into computer science because of unfavorable circumstances in the department and a strong interest in reasoning and learning.

Now at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane for 12 years almost, I have, for the last several been living on a small farm that my husband and I bought. We partially live off the organic gardening he does and have a number of farm animals around us. We also informally run a shelter for stray and left-behind dogs and mistreated donkeys and goats (though we are currently kind of maxed out in terms of animals). The Ifrane region and surroundings have traditionally been poor, mostly rural and left behind, not getting much attention from the central government until recently (and then with doubtfully positive aims).

The University is a major employer for the region, and the city of Ifrane has been a focus of national tourism because of its nature and climate. Recent developments, including a huge

amount of construction in Ifrane, the renovation of a 5-star hotel, construction of a palace belonging to a member of the Qatari royal family, a golf-course placed over a major water source of the region and a water-bottling plant just below it , and other questionable investments by Gulf countries in the area have started negatively impacting the water resources of a region.

On our farm, we live on a well. We are personally and directly aware of the importance of water availability and quality for the region, with its agricultural and sheep-herding economy, and how this is all changing in an apparently poorly planned and unmanaged fashion. Being a major economic force in our region, I believe it is the duty of the University to educate and be involved with the management of the region's resources (as, indeed, it already is many ways).

As a Computer Science professor, my direct engagement in such projects is limited, but I view my contribution to sustainability in the region and beyond as occurring through the informal dialogues I have with my students, in addition to the special programs that I have contributed to as a faculty member or have helped create (multidisciplinary teaching and research, undergraduate research program, honors program and seminars).

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